

00847

1971/07/26

~~MEMORANDUM~~THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

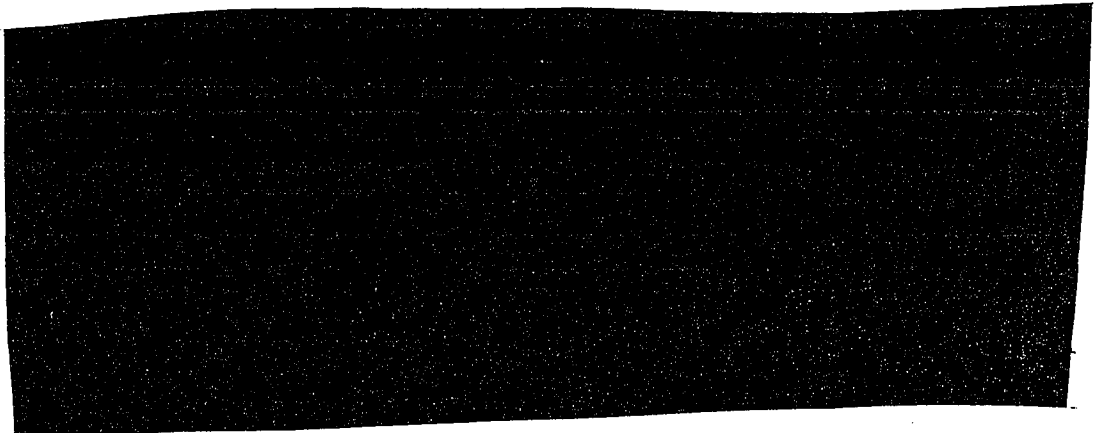
July 26, 1971

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Le Duc Tho, Adviser to the North Vietnamese
Delegation
Xuan Thuy, Chief of North Vietnamese Delegation
Vo Van Sung, North Vietnamese Delegate General
in Paris
Phan Hien, Member of North Vietnamese
Delegation
North Vietnamese Interpreter
Two other North Vietnamese Officials
Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Major General Vernon Walters, Defense Attache
W. Richard Smyser, NSC Staff
Winston Lord, NSC Staff
David R. Halperin, NSC Staff

PLACE: North Vietnamese Residence in Paris, 11 Rue Darthe

DATE & TIME: July 26, 1971; 10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

2

Xuan Thuy: And you said only after an agreement was reached on a framework would you set a date for the withdrawal. If so, it will take time and no settlement would be rapidly reached.

We said that total withdrawal of U.S. forces and the forces of other foreign countries from South Vietnam and other Indochina countries should be completed by the end of 1971. In your reply you made no mention of that.

Regarding Point 2, we have made a step to meet . . .

Kissinger: Which Point 2, yours or ours?

Xuan Thuy: Our Point 2 . . . to meet your request on prisoners. This shows our good will. You said you agreed in principle and were prepared to mention a few more ideas. We shall consider your request. In our view, we feel no difficulty about the views you wanted to add.

Regarding our Point 3. On the one hand, you said it would be contrary to U.S. principles, and a betrayal of the people who had been working with the U.S. for a long time. Therefore we would like to ask, do you refuse to change the present Saigon administration headed by Nguyen Van Thieu?

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

4

Xuan Thuy: As to our Point 8 and our Point 9, you said that you agreed to them. I have nothing to add. When the time comes, we shall discuss these points in detail.

As for our Point 4, our views have been clearly expressed in Point 4 of the 9 points. We have clearly stated the responsibility of the United States for the loss of human life and property caused during the war in both North and South Vietnam.

You want to raise the question of aid. We shall consider your views.

After considering our views and your views expressed at the last meeting, here is the conclusion we have come to:

We have made some progress in the sense that we have agreed to take our 9 points and your 7 points as the basis for discussion. However, there are two crucial points on which your views are not clear yet.

The first crucial point is the question of troop withdrawal. You said that you agreed to the principle of U.S. troop withdrawal linked with the question of prisoners. The two operations begin on the same date and end on the same date.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

11

A third example is on the question of POW's. This is a question of the aftermath of the war, the consequence of war. But we are prepared to settle problems if we can come to an agreement on the military and political questions. The question of prisoners is not difficult at all.

But you want to use the question to overshadow the other questions and therefore the negotiations are protracted. And now we have shown clearly the good will in this question of prisoners, but you refuse to discuss military and political questions, you refuse to set a date for troop withdrawal, you refuse to give up the Saigon Administration, and you don't want to discuss the question of the Administration in South Vietnam.

Le Duc Tho: I want to add one observation. Mr. Harriman, after his participation in the talks here, he went back. I have read a translation of what he has written. Harriman shows the experience on settling the question of stopping the bombing. I believe you have read the book too. And I think Mr. Special Adviser should learn lessons from Mr. Harriman and not follow the same way as he.

Kissinger: I am certain that once I am out of office, all questions will seem as easy for me as they now are for Mr. Harriman.

Xuan Thuy: Anyhow, you can draw some experience from that.

Kissinger: I hope for both of us that I may draw it before I leave office. We do not want to wait six years before settling the war. Let me ask another question.

The Minister said with respect to his Point 2, that he would consider our request of clarifications on the release of prisoners. Does that mean that he will consider furnishing a list on the day agreement is reached and that prisoners throughout Indochina will be released?

Xuan Thuy: Regarding our Point 2 of our nine points. Mr. Special Adviser last time requested that we put some more detail. I say now we should consider these additional matters. That means that after we agree on a terminal date for troop withdrawal, we can then consider the question of furnishing a list of military men and civilians captured during the war.

Regarding the question of prisoners throughout Indochina, I have told the Special Adviser that concerning the Indochina questions we shall reach agreement here and we shall exchange views with our respective allies.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

25

Xuan Thuy: Would the Laotians who speak Vietnamese well be allowed to come to these discussions?

Kissinger: That's right.

Xuan Thuy: The Cambodian problems will be settled by the Cambodian people. The Vietnamese problems will be settled by the Vietnamese people. After that settlement there will be an international conference to guarantee the agreements reached?

Kissinger: Except for those aspects here, such as cease-fire and prisoners of war and neutralization, and of course withdrawal of our forces.

Le Duc Tho: Then where will these questions be discussed?

Kissinger: Here and at Avenue Kleber for details.

Le Duc Tho: But the troop withdrawals and release of prisoners concern only South Vietnam, not the Indochinese countries.

Kissinger: As I understand the Minister and Special Adviser, they have pointed out to me that your proposal concerns all Indochina and that this is one of the big differences between your 9 points and the 7 points of Mme. Binh.

Secondly, you must understand that it is absolutely not possible to make peace unless all prisoners in Indochina are released. That is not open to discussion. How you accomplish this is your problem, but I have great confidence in your persuasive powers.

We do not insist that the details of everything be worked out at an international conference.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY